

Friday, July 21, 2006



NTSB Sends Go-Team To Chicago To Investigate Train Fire

The Safety Board launched a go-team to Chicago to investigate the July 11 Chicago Transit Authority train derailment in a tunnel with a fire on the Blue Line. More than 100 passengers were injured. There were no fatalities.

Member Kitty Higgins, served as spokesperson while on scene. Michael Flanigon was the Investigator-in-Charge of the 12 member team that included: Cy Gura, Russ Quimby, Dana Sanzo, Richard Hipskind, Jay Kivowitz, Nancy McAtee, Dave Watson, Steve Jenner, Denise Daniels and Terry Williams.

Two Day Hearing To Examine Safety Issues Surrounding Cargo Flights



The Safety Board held a two-day hearing on July 12 & 13, 2006, to consider safety issues surrounding cargo aircraft and the potential risks of transporting cargo such as lithium batteries. The hearing, was part of the on-going investigation of the February 7, 2006, fire on board a United Parcel Service (UPS) DC-8 at Philadelphia International Airport (PHL), will begin at 9:30 a.m. in the NTSB's Board Room and Conference Center, 429 L'Enfant Plaza, SW., Washington, D.C. Acting Chairman Mark V. Rosenker has designated Member Deborah Hersman as Chairwoman of the Hearing.

On February 7 the UPS airplane landed at PHL after the crew reported a cargo smoke indication. The three flightcrew members received minor injuries, and fire caused substantial damage to the airplane and numerous cargo containers on board.

During the two-day hearing representatives from the NTSB, Federal Aviation Administration, UPS, Boeing, and the Independent Pilots Association gathered information from industry and government representatives on several topics including Airport Rescue and Firefighting response to the UPS accident; the design, testing and recalls of lithium batteries; regulations concerning the shipping of lithium batteries; and aircraft fire detection and suppression systems.

Information from the hearing will be used by the Safety Board to prepare a final report on the accident, including safety recommendations aimed at preventing similar accidents in the future.

NTSB Launches Two Highway Teams:

Boston's "Big Dig" Collapse and New York City Van Crash

The National Transportation Safety Board has sent a highway team to the scene of the fatal accident, July 10, in the Interstate 90 connector tunnel in Boston, known as the "Big Dig." A portion of the ceiling of a tunnel collapsed onto a car, killing a woman inside the vehicle. Acting Chairman Mark V. Rosenker noted that the tragic tunnel accident raised "serious safety issues that require independent investigation." He said that the Board needed "to find precisely what went wrong in that tunnel and how to prevent similar accidents in the future." The Investigator-in-Charge of the NTSB team is Mark Bagnard. The team includes Bruce Magladry (HS), Jim Wildey (RE), and Keith Holloway (PA) from headquarters, Robert Accetta and Daniel Walsh from the Texas regional highway office, and George Black from the Atlanta regional office.

A Go-Team also was launched to Queens, New York, July 13, where a 15-passenger van, carrying a driver and nine adult passengers, left the roadway and collided with a tree. Witnesses reported that the van was traveling at a high rate of speed and may have been attempting to avoid another vehicle when the accident occurred. The impact resulted in a post-crash fire that engulfed the vehicle, killing five of the van's occupants and seriously injuring the others. The Investigator-in-Charge is Dave Rayburn. Dennis Collins, Hank Hughes, Burt Simon and Jennifer Morrison from HS, and Richard Johnson, an executive program intern, make up the on-scene investigative team.

Board Meeting On Tour Boat Capsizing

The National Transportation Safety Board will hold a public Meeting next Tuesday, July 25, to consider the final investigation report on the capsizing of the tour boat Ethan Allen in Lake George, New York. There were 48 people on board when the vessel capsized on October 2, 2005; twenty passengers lost their lives in the accident. The meeting can be seen via web cast through the NTSB website.



NTSB's Furniture Plan

The Office of Administration (AD) over the past year has begun replacing Safety Board furniture to provide employees a safe, ergonomically correct, functional, and flexible workspace to perform their duties. AD's plan for replacement includes safety as its highest priority, followed by deterioration and then age.

Phase I of the plan was implemented during fiscal year 2005, when AD began the purchasing of replacement furniture sets to correct OSHA violations. Phase II, now underway, includes completion of purchases for OSHA compliance and the replacement of previously identified damaged units. In Phase III, to begin later this year, furniture will be purchased to replace remaining damaged and all outdated units.

The Administrative Services Division in the Office of Administration is responsible for all furniture. Any questions concerning furniture needs should be directed to Gordon Fox or Bill McGruder in the Administrative Services Division.



Member Higgins Welcomes New Assistant

Member Kitty Higgins announced July 11, 2006, that Ms. He Ning has joined the Safety Board as Member Higgins' confidential assistant.

Ms. Ning has had extensive experience in the transportation field, both here and in her native China.

